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VOLUME ONE, NUMBER THREE

AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 1968

HARPSICHORD

Volume I, Number 3; Aug., Sept., Oct.

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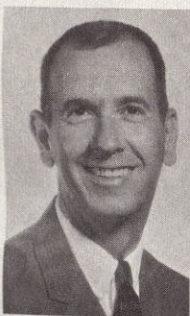
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THE COVER: Our cover for this issue is a section of a beautiful old engraving which first appeared in an Encyclopedia edited by Diderot and d'Alembert in 1751. It shows an instrument makers workshop, cluttered with a variety of instruments in various stages of completion. It introduces a special article by Hal Haney which shows you how to add a second choir of strings to your present harpsichord.

GO FOR BAROQUE

by Hal Haney



Good News! Our journal is now read in all 50 United States as well as Canada, Europe and South America. We have two new advertisers: Artisan Organ Company and John

Morley Harpsichords. (When you write to advertisers be sure to mention *The Harpsichord* so they know how productive a group we are.)

This issue is brimming over with goodies. Our new London Correspondent Hugh Boyle has started with an excellent article. Dr. Brodsky's correspondence in "Letters" deserves special attention and Silvia Kind's sparkling personality shines through "Interview". Our Society and *The Harpsichord* have received special recognition from a nationally known leader in the Arts and Humanities. Details will appear in a future issue and on top of that, we're being listed in Who's Who in Music. Unfortunately, lack of space in this issue has forced us to eliminate some photographs and to postpone the articles, "Salute to a Forgotten Hero" and, "They Had More Than One Thing in Common." However, these stories will appear in a future issue. Our next publication promises to be the most interesting and helpful of the year. It's now in the works and it looks great!

SYMPATHETIC VIBRATIONS

A QUESTION OF PLECTRA

by Wallace Zuckermann



Now that summer is here, this troublesome question achieves added importance. The effect of the material and voicing of harpsichord plectra on both the sound and the action of

a harpsichord cannot be overstressed there, in a two or three hour voicing job, is determined at least 50% of an instrument's quality, playability, volume, definition and evenness.

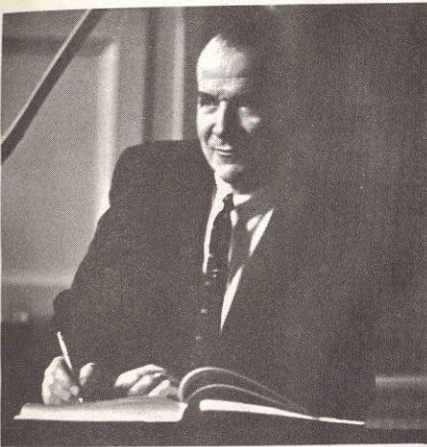
I have a personal theory about plectra which may be in the realm of science fiction (I would appreciate correction by readers): This concerns the difference between organic plectra material (leather and bird quill) versus inorganic (Delrin, nylon, Corfam, etc.) My reasoning is that the cellular or molecular structure of organic material is not regular or "ordered" whereas that of synthetic material is. At the actual point of plucking a string the plectrum is forced against the string from below. When it reaches the string it is forced to "bunch up" as it is driven past the string. A plectrum which can accomplish this process by allowing first one area of its surface then another, to give way during the actual pluck would offer less resistance than one in which all surface areas would give way simultaneously. Thus, a gradual or "uneven" push past the string would result in less resistance (the resistance being distributed over a greater amount of time) and a resultant less "explosive" sound.

It follows that the "uneven" organic material would result in a more pleasant tone and action than the synthetic.

(Continued on page 19)

THE VICE SQUAD OF MUSIC'S WORLD

by Hugh O'Meagher



One hardly expects a member of the Vice-Squad, and particularly of Music's Vice-Squad, to accept money under false pretenses. Yet this questionable practice goes on every day in music-studio everywhere!

Several years ago, a fellow-teacher made an appointment to consult me by having a student perform for my

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The International Society of Harpsichord Builders is proud to give special recognition to the following Contributing Members whose interest and generosity aid materially in the development and preservation of the instruments and music of the baroque period and assists in furthering the various projects and programs of the Society.

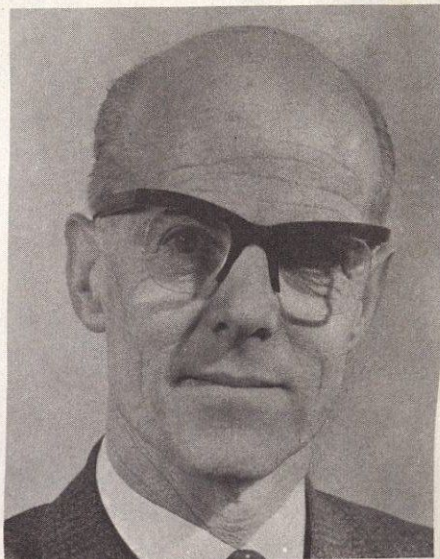
- Mr. Harold W. Bretz
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criticism relating to a forthcoming contest. The student played 'Prelude and Fugue' from Bach's W. T. Clavier. After hearing the piece played, I made suggestions. Both teacher and pupil thanked me and left. The teacher called several days later for another appointment and the whole thing became a sort-of fantastic side-show when the pupil played in the same way as she had done previously, not incorporating a single one of my suggestions relating to the stylistic performance of the piece. I pointed out that in the edition they were using, even the TITLE of the work was incorrectly translated from Bach's own words. I used this as an illustration of the inadequacy of incorrect and un-stylistic performance. I think I know how a Doctor must feel when he advises patients on a course of medicine, only to discover the patient hasn't done at all what he has been told and yet complains that the Doctor hasn't cured him! I will end this anecdote with a tribute to the teacher's honesty: she 'phoned me later on to tell me that the pupil who had won the contest had played in the style I had recommended to her own pupil, and that she wished now that she had been wise enough to follow my advice! All of which means absolutely nothing because it was realized (no pun intended) too late!

Curiously enough, we have these 'vice-squad' operators in both the performing category, as well as in the 'pure exalted spirit' department. What has all this to do with the 'Vice-Squad of Music?' The asseveration is, that these arbiters of taste ARE Music's Vice-Squad, dedicated to the relentless pursuit and annihilation of the "taste for trash." Virtually any of us enjoys popular music when it is played with real taste, real enthusiasm and an authentic sense of the improvisational style on which it depends. The music of the Baroque is an improvisational music also. Like today's popular music, its scores are skeletal. With few exceptions, namely Scarlatti and Couperin-le-Grand, we know that what is on the page is not, by any means, the

(Continued on page 17)

Hugh Boyle Appointed London Correspondent



Hugh Boyle, of New Eltham, London, England, has accepted the appointment of London Correspondent for THE HARPSICHORD and articles of his will appear from time to time under the heading, FROM LONDON.

Mr. Boyle, an I.S.H.B. member, has always had a general interest in music, but has more recently, tended to specialize in the study of intonation. It was while pursuing this line of research that his attention was first attracted to the valuable work done on this subject by the late Llewellyn Southworth Lloyd, and which research resulted in the book "INTERVALS, SCALES AND TEMPERAMENTS", published in London by Macdonald and Company and in New York by St. Martin's Press. Among his various activities is the making of recordings, the most recent of these being carried out for the Royal Musical Association of which he is a member.

In the first of his contributions which appears on page 18 he gives an informative account of a visit he made to John Barnes — a talented builder whose work is concerned with the restoration and reproduction of antique keyboard instruments.

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INTERVIEW with Silvia Kind

To say that Silvia Kind (rhymes with mint) is a remarkable woman is a gross understatement. She has captivated musical audiences throughout all Europe, Canada and America with her exceptional talent and vivacious personality. She has received rave reviews in such important cities as London, "A wonderful musical personality"; Berlin, "brilliant"; Hamburg, "A delicious evening which will not be forgotten"; Zurich "Silvia Kind is not only a great artist, knowing all the possibilities of the harpsichord, but she recalls it to new life."

Born in Chur, Grisons, Switzerland she studied at the Konservatorium Zurich in piano, flute, counterpoint, composition, orchestra and choir conducting.

After having received her diplomas in piano and theory, she continued her studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin with Paul Hindemith, Ewin Fischer and E. Harich Schneider (harpsichord) and conducted the University Choir.

Upon receiving the "Konzert-Reife-Prüfung" for piano, she returned to Switzerland. Again in Zurich, she became the pupil and assistant of Hermann Scherchen, was a member of the Radio-Orchestra Zurich for keyboard instrument, kept lectures for "Volkshochschule", was conductor of three choirs, wrote articles for newspapers and musical journals and gave many concerts.

In 1945 she started appearing in Italy, Austria, Germany, England and since 1949 she has been professor at the "Hochschule für Musik" in Berlin for harpsichord. She has given recitals concerts and lectures upon invitation by 14 universities in the United States and Canada (Harvard, Princeton, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, Vancouver, etc.)

Her American debut was made to a capacity audience on January 31, 1964 in Carnegie Hall, New York. Howard Klein of the New York Times The Harpsichord

wrote glowingly of this recital.

Upon learning that Miss Kind was again in the United States, THE HARPSICHORD contacted her in Seattle, Washington where she was lecturing and arranged for this exclusive in-person interview.

The beautiful full-page photo on page 5 was taken by Wienard Stockmann of Berlin and shows Miss Kind acknowledging applause after a recital at Schloss Charlottenburg.

THE HARPSICHORD: The harpsichord shown in your photograph looks like an exceptionally fine instrument. Can you tell us about it?

SILVIA KIND: This instrument is one of two which was made for Queen Sophie Charlotte of Prussia. It was probably made by a Berlin master. The Queen was an excellent musician and very probably received the instruments at the beginning of her reign around 1700. I think it is interesting that she was a grandmother of Frederick the Great and was a close friend of the German philosopher and scientist Leibniz. "Charlottenburg" means "Castle for Charlotte" and was her summer home.

The two-manual instrument shown in the picture has three sets of strings: an 8 and 4 on the lower manual and an 8 on the upper. The coupler must be pushed by hand and the stops are on the upper border. You must stretch your arms to reach them. But, as I always say, a performer has to be an acrobat too!

THE HARPSICHORD: Because of your wide experience, you probably have some ideas of your own about building harpsichords.

SILVIA KIND: Yes, I do. I have several ideas but I have not related them to the builders as yet. One of the things I would like to see would be a two foot choir of strings on the harpsichord.

THE HARPSICHORD: How did you become interested in a two foot pitch?

Do you play organ?

SILVIA KIND: Very rarely. It is dangerous. I would like to play more but I do not have the time. But I think a 2 foot choir would be wonderful. I remember correctly there is a very strange harpsichord in a small town in Italy. It stands in a wonderful palazzo and was built by Dolmetsch. It had 10 pedals and was strung with three 8', two 4' and I think a 2' choir. It was a curious instrument. When you put in the pedals, little red lamps would light up to let you know what register you were in. The lights did not work but the instrument had a wonderful sound. It was very difficult to play. It would require several days of work to learn how to operate the mechanics of it.

THE HARPSICHORD: You were fortunate to have fine professors who instructed you correctly when you started playing harpsichord. Do you have any suggestions for students who can not study with fine teachers?

SILVIA KIND: There are many wonderful sources of instruction on how to play harpsichord. Jean-Philippe Rameau gives exact indications on how to play. In the 1720's he was the most fashionable teacher of harpsichord playing and musical theory and we can still learn from him today. Like most artists trained in the traditional baroque style, he believed that the purpose of art was communication. He believed one should express human feeling, depict nature and reveal truth through reason and that the systems of both harmony and tonality have precise expressive functions. He tells us all these things. And, of course, Tommaso de Santa Maria, the Dominican monk who lived in the 16th century. He published an introduction to the art of playing fantasies on keyboard instruments which is wonderful. A great help.

THE HARPSICHORD: You travel a



Silvia Kind after a concert given on a 260-year old instrument of Schloss Charlottenbing in Berlin.



"You cannot isolate Baroque Music from the other arts. You cannot."

great deal. Do you get to play every day?

SILVIA KIND: No. Not really. I'm not a very good example. Sometimes I work very hard and if I am traveling I work wonderfully. For example, today I had eight hours of music. I can do this very well for a short time, but of course I can't keep this up forever. I change with the weather I guess. I'm like an animal. In America the weather is changing all the time and I change along with it. I can feel it inside. I can feel when a snow is coming. I can feel when a deep depression is coming or bright sun and a clear day just like a weather forecaster.

THE HARPSICHORD: What are your comments on the difference between leather and quill plectra?

SILVIA KIND: I have all leather. I like it very much. I have a set of jacks with nylon, too, so I can change if I like, but I think for the climate in America the plastic would be more stable. Leather is not very good when it becomes damp. We have quite a young and fine technician in Zurich who has worked with Neupert and other builders. He made a wonderful little virginal for me. A lovely virginal. I believe he has studied all types of plectra and designs and this has resulted in him using the very best of

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everything. If he should ever put this talent into making harpsichords that would be ideal.

THE HARPSICHORD: Do you recall his name?

SILVIA KIND: Oh yes. Wappmann. He is a German who has lived for some time in Switzerland. He is one of my sons in law.

THE HARPSICHORD: A son in law?

SILVIA KIND: Not really. But he is married to one of my pupils, and all of my pupils are my children. Even in America I find sons and daughters in law and grand children. It is very wonderful. You know, they are every-



"The clavichord is not as tender as many people believe."

where. Wherever I go I have a relative.

THE HARPSICHORD: When you are traveling, do you use your own harpsichord?

SILVIA KIND: Never. My harpsichord never moves. I just play whatever they have.

THE HARPSICHORD: Have you played a pedal harpsichord?

SILVIA KIND: Yes, but I really don't believe it is necessary to have one. It is very useful for the art of the fugue, but you can do without. I do not like it very much. Of course I am not opposed to them. Bach had one, but I think he did not use it for the solo pieces. Probably just the sonatas, trios, toccatas and such.

THE HARPSICHORD: When you were first learning to play, did you have a harpsichordist you looked up to for inspiration? Someone you admired?

SILVIA KIND: It is strange, but I did not. It was the instrument that inspired me to continue. Not the players. It is very strange and I do not listen to records. I do not like them. I just like the instrument. You know, everybody has his own idea of how a piece should sound. If you like a piece very much, you would not like to hear it from another person. It reminds me of Johann Jacob Froberger who was a pupil of Frescobaldi from 1637 to 1641. He never allowed other people to play his own music. He was a great composer. Bach admired him. But he never liked other people to play his music. I can very well understand this.

THE HARPSICHORD: Your love of the harpsichord did not then come from another person?

SILVIA KIND: That is very true. This perhaps sounds a little strange but I have never found my ideal harpsichord player. Of course this is quite wrong, but I can't help it.

THE HARPSICHORD: You dislike phonograph records?

SILVIA KIND: Yes. Except that they are better than the piano. I dislike



"You must feel Baroque as a time."

both piano and records . . . except the piano and records of Glenn Gould. He has such a marvelous touch. He has every technique required for fine interpretation.

THE HARPSICHORD: Do you think he should be playing the harpsichord?

SILVIA KIND: He likes the harpsichord. He likes the harpsichord very much, but he is a pianist. And I don't think he would like to change now. It is a shame he does not often play the piano now. He likes to compose, conduct and write. He is an excellent journalist too. He is, for me, the greatest pianist I have ever heard. It is terrible that he is not giving concerts any more. He told me that he is only happy in the recording studios. He does not like to play for a live audience. It is a tragedy.

THE HARPSICHORD: Does playing in public bother you?

SILVIA KIND: No. In the first moment when I walk out in front of the audience I feel a very strong wave for me or against me. Mostly for me. Like a wave of kindness. And then I forget completely. Sometimes I am astonished when I finish a number and the applause comes. I completely forget where I am. It happens often. However, at the beginning, I am terribly afraid. Terribly. It's like jumping headfirst into cold water. And for the first measures I am always lost. I am under water. So I decide never to play at the beginning, a piece which is well known because I am swimming. I always choose pieces for the beginning which are generally not known. That is very wise advice.

THE HARPSICHORD: Does the type of audience ever disturb you?

SILVIA KIND: No. When I play, I play. If I have only one real listener in the audience, then I am happy. But I forget about those things. There are some people who do not play too well who play for important audiences, but I do not believe that is honest. Of course there are little tricks to add interest and emotion to your playing. For example if you have a run, Frescobaldi indicates that you should wait until the very last moment, then play the run at fast as possible. That's a very old trick.

THE HARPSICHORD: Do you use these tricks?

SILVIA KIND: All these tricks. You have to because not all people notate the music as it should be played. But we have much to help us. We have all these books so there is no excuse to play this music incorrectly. There is no excuse. It is all here. You have to study them and you have to feel it. I mean, if you feel baroque as a time, not just the music. You have to understand the whole baroque. The paintings, the literature, the architecture, the costume and then the music. I have a class of musicology and I tell my class "Be not a musicologist with blinders on." You learn much from letters, from memories of great people of that time and from looking at sculpture and architecture. You learn much more than if you just keep your nose in books. Open your eyes as well as your ears to this period and you will automatically open your heart. And you will never be quite the same again. Your music will have new meaning and it will become an important part of your life. It is really true.

I was very lucky in this regard. When I was young and in Italy I had the opportunity to spend much time in the most wonderful buildings you could dream of. I remember so very well back when I was practicing, how I came under the magical spell of those wonderful surroundings. The beautifully embellished ceilings, the magnificent paintings, the columns, arches and grand expanses of polished floors and sweeping vistas through noble windows . . . it changed my

playing.

You can not isolate baroque music from the other arts. You can not. If you see baroque sculpture by Bernini, you will play in quite another way. In a completely different way. This, I think is the most important thing I can leave to my students.

THE HARPSICHORD: Then you feel that what is happening to the musician inside is as important as what is physically happening to the music outside?

SILVIA KIND: Yes indeed. Of course you can't forget the mechanics of the music either. Timing is particularly important in the early baroque music. It is not as spectacular nor does it have the drama and drive of later music. I insist that my students work with a metronome in order to get it correct. It is interesting to note, that when it comes to time, there is a great similarity between American jazz and baroque music. There is syncopation in both.

THE HARPSICHORD: In early works, the embellishments were not noted. What is your approach to this problem?

SILVIA KIND: Between about 1570 and 1620 every year we have a new theory book about embellishments. Of course we have standard embellish-

(Continued on page 11)



"We live in the 20th Century. Why should we not use the progress?"

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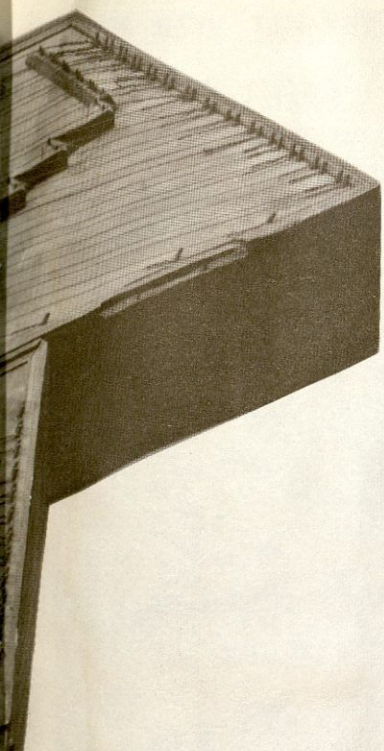
HARPSICHORD

of NOTE



The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical
Instruments, 1889.

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We must assume that Jean Marius was born sometime in the last quarter of the 17th century since his earliest known instrument is dated 1700. This was more than half a century before Nonnemacher built the harpsichord shown here.

In 1700 Marius received a Royal Privilege of 20 years for his invention. Through the kind assistance of our very cooperative and active I.S.H.B. member George K. Huber of Swarthmore College, Swathmore, Pa., the Society now has on file a copy of the original description of the Marius invention. The Swathmore College Library recently received 7 volumes describing and illustrating early inventions. The title of the volumes is Academie de Sciences, Paris. The subheading reads: (my translation) "Machines and inventions approved by the Royal Academy of Sciences from its establishment to the present: Designed and published with the approval of the Academy by M. Gallon. Paris, 1735-1777." Mr. Huber not only supplied us with the above information, but he copied the three drawings which are found on page 10 and sent us the original French description which we loosely translate here.

FOLDING HARPSICHORD

Figure No. 1 (see page 10) is the harpsichord entirely closed. Each fold or section contains its own set of keys which is pulled out on grooves. All of these are then brought together and the harpsichord becomes one instrument in very little time. It is formed in the following way:

Part A.B. is joined on the inside next to C.D. by the hinges E.F. and on the other side by hooks which are disengaged. The harpsichord is then opened as shown in figure 2. (see page 10).

Side G.H. is opened into 2 equal parts as shown in figure 1 and joined together by another hinge, I.K. by means of which the small section can be placed alongside of G.I. and is held there by a hook under the harpsichord.

The tabs 1, 2, 3, serve to pull out the keys of the harpsichord under each section. This places all the keys in

their correct place and forms an ordinary harpsichord. The flap N is to close the harpsichord back to figure 1 when it is folded.

Mr. Marius claims that the harpsichord keeps its tune easily because the sides, against which the strings are attached, are made up of several short sections which produce less flexibility. However, it would appear that this instrument would be subjected more to string distention than a harpsichord which always stayed in the same place since the portable harpsichord would be subjected to bumps during transportation as well as extra stress due to opening and closing. Of course this instrument is just as susceptible to humidity and dryness as any other instrument. The principal advantage of the Marius harpsichord is that it is easily transportable, which would counteract, in part, the inconvenience to which it would appear to be subject.

Upon reading the description, Mr. Huber commented "Despite what the inventor says, I just imagine that this instrument was no delight to keep in tune!"

It is interesting to note that Marius didn't stop with the invention of the folding or traveling harpsichord. In the 1720's he worked alone on the mechanics which became the basis for the modern piano. At the same time, two other inventors in two different countries were working on similar devices; Schroter in Germany and Cristofori in Italy. Marius also designed a cross between the harpsichord and piano which he called "Clavecin a Maillets et a Sautereaus." Unfortunately, no known example of this instrument survives.

The famous Medici collection, which from 1716 to 1731 was directed by Cristofori, contained a *Clavecin Brisé* which is believed to have been one of Marius' instruments.

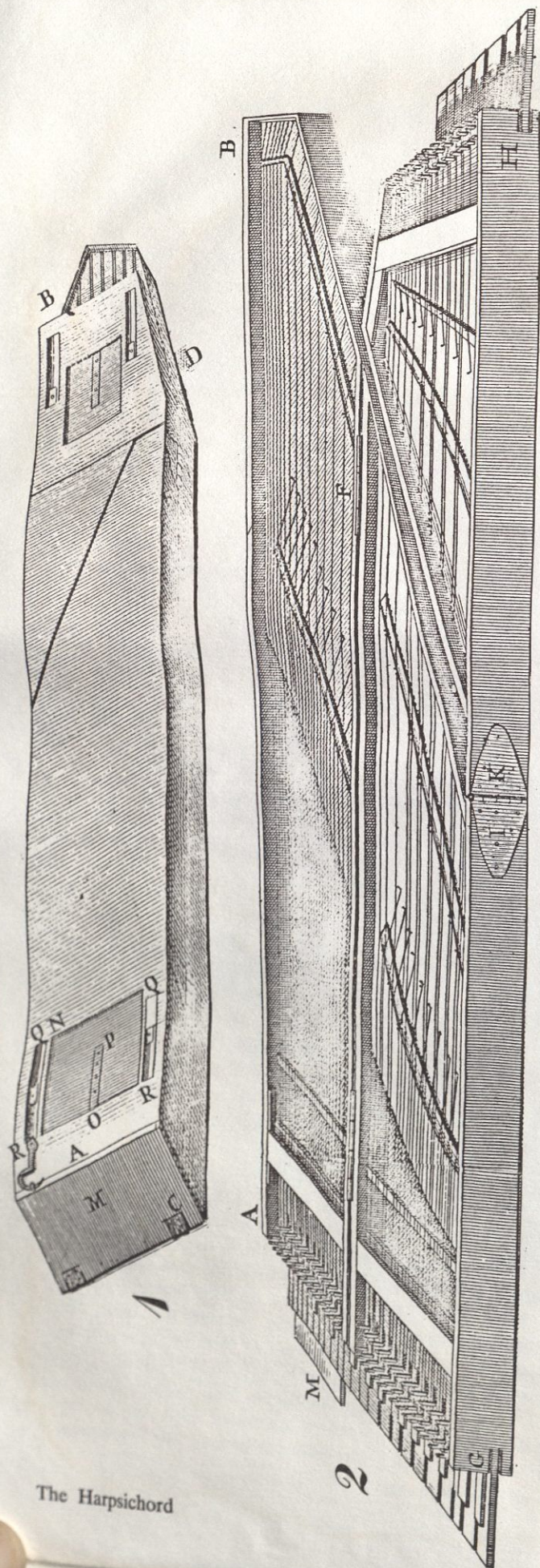
Only 6 folding harpsichords by Jean Marius survive. Of these, the whereabouts of five are known to be in collections in Paris, Brussels, Leipzig and Berlin. One was auctioned in London in July of 1901 and no further record is known. His instruments

(Continued on page 19)

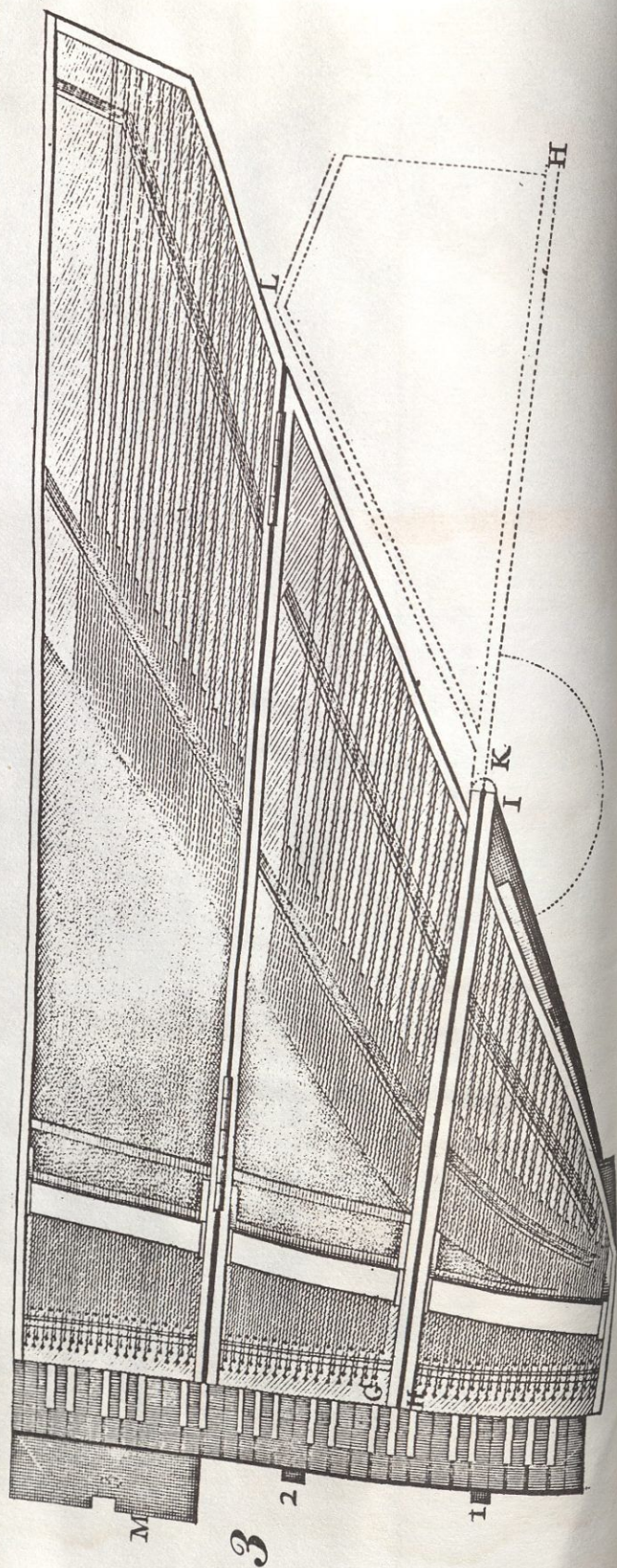
The unique instrument selected as this issue's "Harpsichord of Note" shows a great deal of inventiveness and mechanical knowledge. However; the builder of this particular instrument, Christianus Nonnemacher, a German Harpsichord builder did not invent the folding harpsichord or *Clavecin Brisé* as it was called.

Little is known of Christianus Nonnemacher other than he lived sometime during the middle part of the 18th century. This particular harpsichord is dated 1757. It contains two choirs of strings. The devise for moving the jack slide is not visible on this instrument, however, there might be a stop knob located on the far side of the case, or immediately under the keyboard. We were not able to examine this harpsichord because, like most of the beautiful instruments owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it is kept stored in the basement where it is not available for public view.

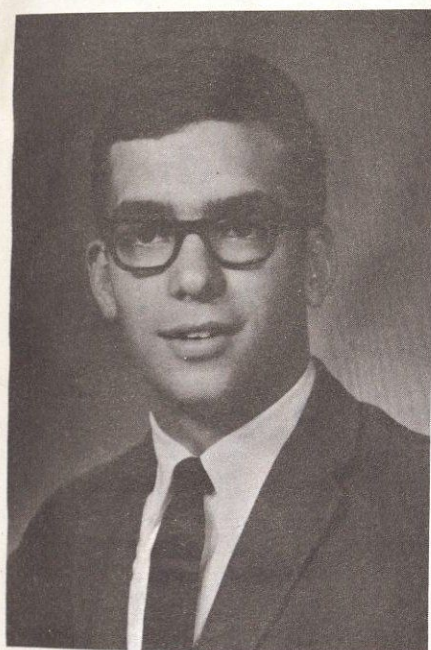
We can not give Nonnemacher much credit for the creation of this harpsichord since it is a direct copy of one invented by Jean Marius of Paris.



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SOCIETY LIBRARY GROWS WITH NEW COMPOSITION BY BRIAN FLORA



The I.S.H.B. Library has just received an excellent tape and score of a new composition PSALLYTE, for Harpsichord, Guitar and Flute by the promising young composer Brian R. Flora of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The solo harpsichord opens the work with a martial 4/4 beat. The guitar then joins in and finally the flute is added. The flute soon takes command of the melody line and the harpsichord and guitar continue with a positive rhythm. The second part is reminiscent of a Negro spiritual and the third part creates an animated folk dance.

Upon hearing this composition for the first time, the reviewer sensed a feeling of the vast spaces of the West and from time to time the haunting sound of Indian melodies seemed to weave their way in and out of the fabric of the work. While the composer does not mention any such inspiration, the relationship is possible since Brian's home, Albuquerque, is located in the heart of Indian country.

The composition is easy to play and wonderful for both an informal gathering or a formal recital. The length is approximately four minutes.

It's premier performance took place at the University of New Mexico Recital Hall on February 16, 1968 during "The February Musical" a parade of American music featuring New Mexican Composers.

Brian is one of our youngest I.S.H.B. composers. He graduated from high school just this past June. He is a native of Albuquerque and the son of musical parents. He has been studying keyboard music since the age of 9. He has been active in vocal music as well and has appeared in feature rolls of many local musical comedy productions.

"I have a very active interest in the structure and technique of current popular music," Brian said. "It was from this music that I got the idea of using primarily minor-sevenths in a piece of serious music."

Both the tape and individual scores for PSALLYTE are available for loan from the Society library for a period of one month. A \$1 fee must accompany the request to cover postage and insurance. Requests should be sent to Library Committee, I.S.H.B., Box 9287, Denver, Colorado 80209.

SILVIA KIND

(Continued from page 7)

ment, the trill and such which are written out. That is not the problem. Especially with our French composers. Each composer has his own unique style and you get to know this. This is not true of Italian composers. They seldom indicate embellishments. Oh, sometimes they will write "tr" for trill, but they are not too helpful when it comes to other instructions.

THE HARPSICHORD: How do you think the trill should be played?

SILVIA KIND: Well, it depends on the piece you are playing. It should generally start out slowly then increase in speed. Of course, these are not set embellishments. If you are playing a tender piece, then the embellishment should be tender, but if you are playing a wild piece, the embellishments should be played in a rather violent manner. Embellishments should always follow the mood or emotion of

the piece. They should never be pasted on. They should be a part of the melody.

But another important thing is not just to have a wild time on the harpsichord. These people were very educated. They had a lot of discipline. You have to have discipline in the same way, with a wild temperament.

THE HARPSICHORD: You mean, then, that the people of the baroque period were very disciplined?

SILVIA KIND: Yes indeed. And the harpsichord itself demands discipline. It can not be banged. You have only the fingers. And every book, every old master says not to make a movement on the harpsichord which is not absolutely necessary. So when you see the stiff pictures of stiff ladies at the harpsichord you can understand why. Of course they also had clothes which did not permit them to move easily, but the harpsichord demands discipline. You must develop the ability to release this wild temperament without a lot of movement. On the other hand Phillip Emanuel Bach says sometimes a jest can help in understanding music

THE HARPSICHORD: A jest?

SILVIA KIND: Yes, a movement, a jester. When you see the baroque pictures they are all turning their heads to the side. This is really a baroque movement. This is permitted. But not the great movements and dramatics you see on the piano. This is not possible on the harpsichord.

THE HARPSICHORD: Do you enjoy playing the clavichord?

SILVIA KIND: Oh yes. The first thing I asked for at the university was a clavichord.

THE HARPSICHORD: How would you describe the touch between the harpsichord and clavichord?

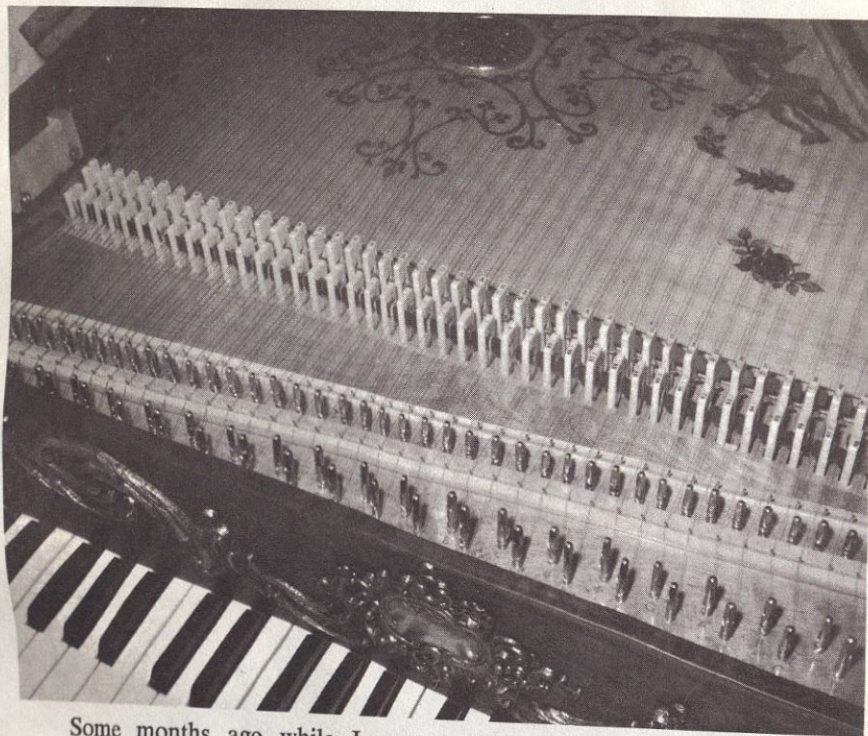
SILVIA KIND: It can not be compared. The clavichord played with the harpsichord touch sounds terribly much like straw. The sound of the harpsichord with the clavichord touch would be quite impossible.

(Continued on page 15)

The Harpsichord

HOW TO ADD A SECOND CHOIR OF STRINGS TO YOUR HARPSICHORD

by Hal Haney



Some months ago while I was visiting Wallace Zuckermann at his studio in Manhattan, he mentioned the possibility of adding a second choir of strings to his basic 8' harpsichord kit.

"It's quite simple," he said. "There are no basic changes to be made and it's not necessary to remove or change the strings already installed. The idea really originated with Robert Chuckrow, a physicist in Brooklyn. He first suggested the change to me and it was Chuckrow who wrote the first set of instructions and did the drawings."

Mr. Zuckermann then gave me four pages of instructions and two drawings which I took home and studied. It did indeed *seem* simple enough. At this time I recalled a conversation I had with talented harpsichord builder Dennis Brown on a snowy winter day in Laramie, Wyoming. He had just finished building a beautiful two manual double '8 and 4' instrument which occupied one side of his large livingroom. We were talking about other instruments he had built and he mentioned his first keyboard

The Harpsichord

instrument, the Zuckermann.

"I'm sorry I didn't put in a second choir of strings," he said. "There was plenty of space and it would have been no problem at all. By reducing the width of the jack slide, another could be inserted easily. Unfortunately a musician insisted on buying the instrument before I had an opportunity to go to work on it."

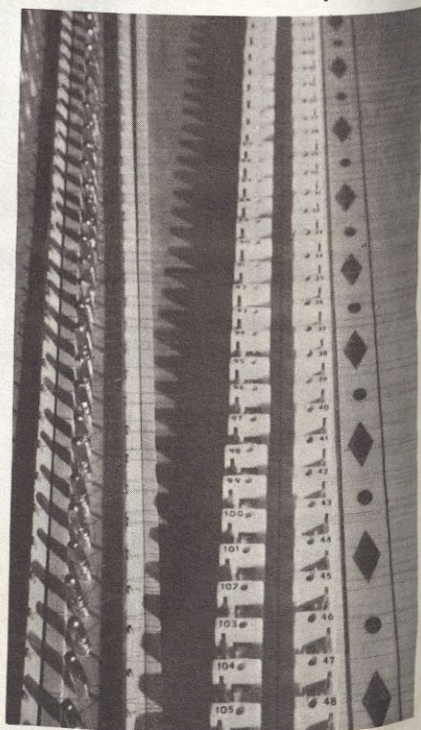
So far, everyone I talked with seemed to think there would be no problem, but I had yet to talk with Chuckrow, the man who started it all, so I decided to call him and learn the whole story.

Speaking in a pleasant, youthful voice, he told me "I finished my harpsichord about three years ago, and while it was satisfactory in every way, I got tired of only being able to change from full to half stop and from open to buffed string. And yet, I didn't want to make any structural changes in the instrument. I firmly believe that if something is working and is doing the job it was originally designed to do, you shouldn't disturb it. If you can improve the design by additions or

slight modifications, fine, but I can see no reason for tearing into something that's working well. I consulted with Mr. Zuckermann in ordering parts and modifying some existing parts. He had many suggestions and helpful ideas and between the two of us we got the job done. I'm very happy with the results. I now have eight tonal registers. This gives a great deal more color to my music, and it's much more satisfying to me."

I talked with Chuckrow a few moments more before he said; "Would you excuse me now, please? You caught me in the middle of shaving and I have menthol foam all over my face!" Later, I learned from Chuckrow that he teaches physics at the New York University and he is currently working on his Ph.D. He is a considerate man and we owe him a debt of gratitude for sharing his plans with us.

I found the change very easy to make. And now that it is finished, I find myself at the harpsichord more often and for longer periods than ever before. The cost for the extra parts, strings, jacks, etc., comes to about \$65 and this comparatively small investment increases the value of your harpsichord many times that amount, to say nothing of the increased pleasure you derive from the variety of voices



you have at your command.

Here's how the change is made. (Instructions will be sent with your parts when you order them from Zuckermann, however those of you who make your own parts will find the following instructions useful.)

The present jacks will be moved slightly towards the rear of the instrument and will pluck the present strings closer to their center, thus producing a more fluty tone than before. The new set of strings, on the other hand, will be plucked very close to the nut, thus producing a fairly nasal tone. The tone of each set of strings alone should be an improvement over the original sound of the instrument. Both sets of strings can be used individually or simultaneously, the later producing double volume and a beautiful silvery tone. Also each set of strings can be provided with a buff (lute) stop, thereby making possible eight different sound combinations.

The old set of strings will be plucked to the right (as is presently the case) whereas the new set of strings will be plucked to the left. (See drawing 2). Therefore, there will be a sequence of close pairs of strings with two jacks between one close pair and the next close pair. This spacing of close pairs is really the only critical part. If the close pairs of strings are spaced too close, then the dampers will interfere with the wrong strings. If the close pairs are not spaced closely enough, the jacks, when moved to the off position (so they can rise without plucking,) will touch the strings on the opposite side.

Since you will have two sets of strings and two sets of jacks, this is a wonderful opportunity to introduce two different types of plectra. If your first (and current) set of plectra is leather, you may want to make your second set of plectra Delrin. This gives a greater variety of tone color. Of course, if your current plectra are Delrin, you may want to introduce leather. I have placed my Delrin plectra close to the nut and the leather plectra further away from the nut and am very pleased with the results. With this arrangement, you may feel that

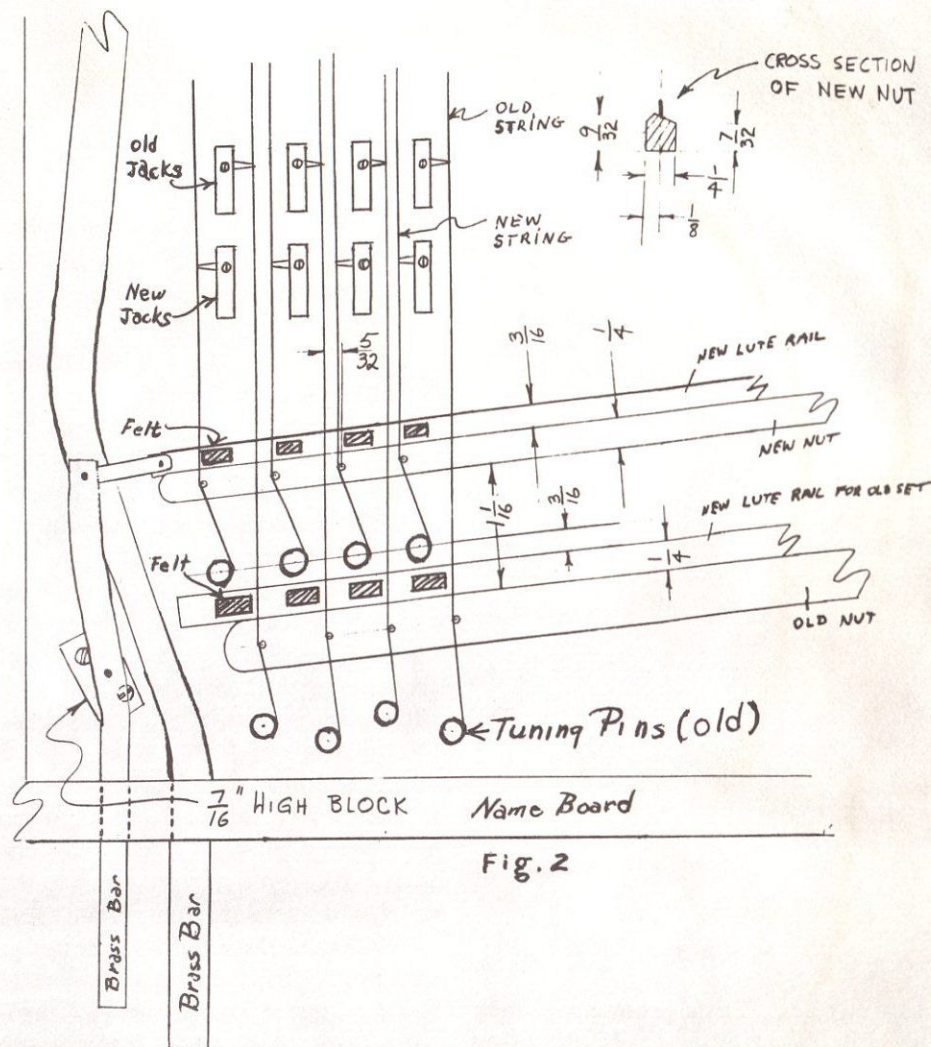


Fig. 2

the leather is a little too fluty and the Delrin too crisp and nasal but that is a matter of personal opinion. Since you will be most probably the one playing and listening to the instrument, it should suit your likes and dislikes. There is actually no standard harpsichord sound. The instrument is a very personal one and the end tonal result is up to you.

NEW ITEMS REQUIRED

1. Nut 9/32" high and 1/4" wide
2. Lute rail for old nut 1/4" sq.
3. Lute rail for new nut 3/16" sq.
4. Set of tuning pins
5. Set of bridge pins and nut pins
6. Stringing wire
7. Set of jacks with short end pins
8. Brass lever bars
9. Buff or lute felts
10. Key and felt
11. New jack rail and support blocks
12. Strip of jack rail rubber
13. New double jack guide and supporting rail

14. Eschutcheon pins for lute rails
15. 2 capstans
16. 1 hitchpin
17. 2 narrower jack slides

OLD ITEMS TO BE REMOVED

1. Old lute rail with felts.
2. Old key end felts
3. Old lower jack guide and supporting rail
4. Jack rail and supporting blocks
5. Jack slide

CONSTRUCTION PROCEDURE

1. Remove the following from the harpsichord:

- a. Jack rail & supporting blocks
- b. Jacks (preserve order)
- c. Nameboard
- d. Keyboard
- e. Hand levers
- f. Lower jack guide
- g. Jack slide (this will slide out underneath the strings.)
- h. Lute rail

2. Remove old felt at key ends

(Continued next page)

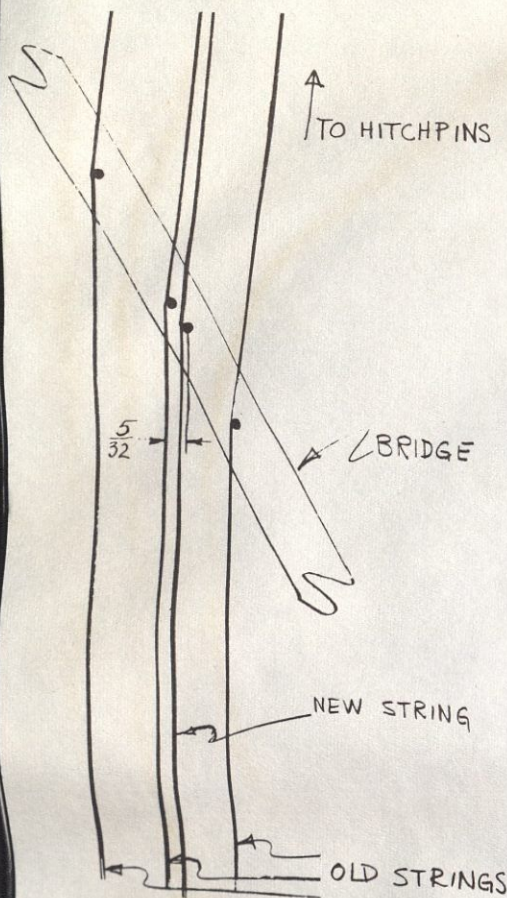


Fig. 1

new position. The capstan holes may be pulled or planing off. If using plane, set for very thin cut.

3. Glue on $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " strips of key end felt using white glue as follows: Spread glue thinly over the surface of the key to receive felt. Then gently place felt in place. Do not clamp or weight felt or apply glue directly to the felt as this will stiffen felt and cause clatter. I have found General Electric's Silicone Rubber "Clear Seal" ideal for this purpose. It won't shrink, drip or sag, bonds fabric to wood beautifully and, most important of all, always stays flexible. It cures in about an hour but never gets hard. It is so resilient you could use it without felt if you could figure out a way to do it easily. The price is rather high (3 oz. for \$1.95 here in Denver), but it's worth it and it's guaranteed for 10 years by G.E.!

4. Drill 2 holes on each side for capstans with No. 17 drill. It is possible that the old holes for capstans will stop one of the jack slides in its

have to be drilled through the outer case from the outside. This was true with my harpsichord. In that event, the outer case can later be patched with filler, or a dowel and veneer.

5. Screw in capstans. If they are too tight, drill holes with next size drill. Liquid soap (Joy, Dove and the like) may help too. Remember, capstans break very easily.

6. Remove the 4 guide screws from pinblock and belly rail.

7. Place both jack slides in position. If they fit too snugly they may be sanded. In fact it is a good idea to sand these slides a little anyway to assure a smooth movement.

8. Mark off position of holes in bridge for bridge pins as follows: Set compass to $\frac{5}{32}$ ". Place point of compass against the left hand side (bass side) of present string, and strike off a distance of $\frac{5}{32}$ " to the right at center of bridge (see Figure 1.) Point of compass is set on block of wood the height of bridge. The $\frac{5}{32}$ " distance is measured at right angles to the string, *not* along the bridge line.

9. Drill bridge pin holes in bridge with No. 55 drill.

10. Insert bridge pins by turning in with a hand drill. If this is too difficult, you may use taped pliers to turn them into place, but whatever you do, don't hammer them in. That would be a great way to ruin a perfectly good sound board!

11. Draw center line along top

of new nut. Position new nut parallel to old nut a distance of $1\frac{1}{6}$ " apart. Temporarily tack nut in position by means of 3 brads placed where interference with nut pins will result (see figure 2). Nut will be crowned after drilling nut pin holes.

12. Mark off position of holes for nut pins as follows: Set compass to $\frac{5}{32}$ ". Place point against the left hand side (bass side) of old string and strike off an arc to the right at center of nut.

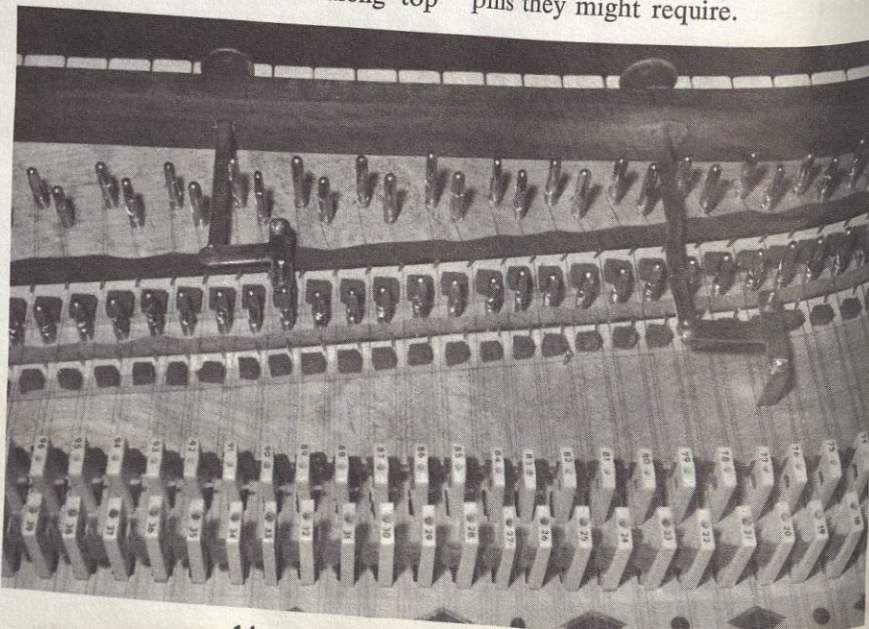
13. Remove nut, drill nut pin holes with No. 55 drill. Crown nut. (See figure 2.) Sand nut.

14. Sand $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " lute rail. Position against old nut. Mark off and drill 3 holes in pinblock for escutcheon pins to hold lute rail against nut. Fasten lute rail in position with escutcheon pins. *This must be done now, as it can not be done after tuning pins are in!* That would make you very sad indeed.

15. Glue nut in place with white glue, clamping by use of 3 brads mentioned in step 11. After glue dries, extend nut holes about $\frac{1}{4}$ " into pinblock and insert pins.

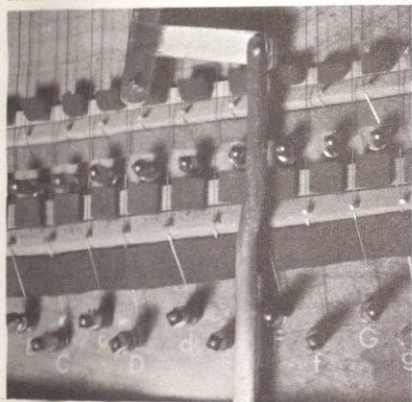
16. Mark off centers of holes for tuning pins (see figure 2) putting them centrally between old strings.

17. Drill holes for tuning pins in pinblock using $\frac{3}{16}$ " drill. Be sure to drill them straight and deeply enough to take all the threads on the tuning pins they might require.



18. Turn in tuning pins with tuning wrench to a height of $1\frac{3}{16}$ ".
Caution: Do not hammer pins in as this might crack pinblock and then you would really be in a fix! Turn pins in slowly to prevent burning pinblock. Feel pin at base from time to time. If it gets hot, slow down!

19. Sand, position and fasten $\frac{3}{16}$ " x $\frac{3}{16}$ " lute rail against new nut.



20. String harpsichord, chipping to approximate pitch. Old hitchpins will be used for new strings (one close pair per hitchpin). However, one new hitchpin for the lowest bass string must be added. Drill hole for this hitchpin with No. 49 drill about $\frac{3}{8}$ " from last present hitchpin.

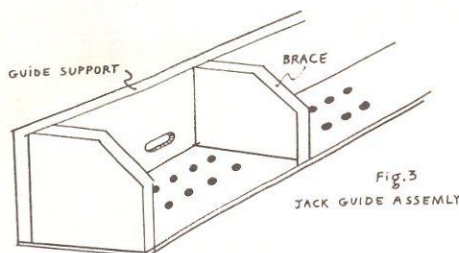
21. Glue and nail new lower jack rail (the double one) to supporting rail and screw this to belly rail making sure jacks are centered on keys (see figure 3).

22. Insert keyboard.

23. Prepare new jacks, using shorter end pins. To make this job child's play, build yourself an Ellis Jack Jig. See Vol. 1, No. 1 of *THE HARPSICHORD* for complete plans and instructions.

24. Insert both new and old jacks.

25. Install hand levers. You may want to arrange these differently from the way they are suggested here. The old set should get its lever where it was before (loud-soft). It will now be used to put the entire set on or off. You may be able to use your original lever as I was. On the left side, where the lute stop used to be, the lever for the new set is installed which will serve as on-off for new set of jacks.



This lever can go through former lute stop hole in nameboard.

The two lute stop levers can be placed anywhere you choose. I have placed mine near the center of the nameboard and have arranged them so they operate by pushing or pulling in or out. In this way they can be pushed "off" with one finger while playing. This requires a "direction changer" which I formed from heavy brass plate. The photograph illustrates this clearly. This linkage works very well for me, but you may be able to come up with a better design. Figure 2 shows a more conventional control for the lute stops.

26. Glue on lute felts with lute stops in "on" position. Felts go to the right of new strings. Felts go to the left of old strings.

27. Voice harpsichord. Jacks should be adjusted so that they pluck successively, not together, when key is depressed slowly. Dampers on new jacks should be long enough so that they damp when new jacks are in off position. They should not be so long that they touch the other string of the close pair. When in off position, a register must be completely quiet. Adjust so that between $\frac{1}{32}$ " to $\frac{1}{16}$ " motion is all that is necessary to engage register from an off position. If jacks touch opposite strings when in off position, plectra must be shortened.

28. Tuning. Tune old strings first with the new jacks in off position. After old strings are all tuned, tune new strings to the old ones.

That's all there is to it. While it will probably take some time to voice and adjust the plectra and jacks (in fact, with a harpsichord, the job is never ever really finished) you will find the time well spent and a small price to pay for the endless hours of pleasure you will receive.

SILVIA KIND

(Continued from page 11)

THE HARPSICHORD: How would you describe the clavichord touch?

SILVIA KIND: The difficult thing is because the tangent must stay on the string. If you read Forkel's biography of Bach he gives a wonderful description of how Bach played clavichord. You must keep the tangent on the string. You must have even pressure. He describes how he moved the finger over the whole key. He makes this movement (she moves her finger in and out on the key) to have the same pressure. He just did not press the key. He was always wavy except for very fast numbers.

And then we have the description of Thomas de Santa Maria. He suggests hanging the hand over the edge of the keyboard and touching the key with only the fleshy part of the finger and not using the tips of the finger. Just try it. Place only the ball of the fingers on the keys and let the whole hand hang down in front of the keys. You have much more strength in the fingers that way. The clavichord is not as tender as many people believe. You need some strength too. You can feel the vibration in your fingers. Without it the only word I can find to describe the sound is straw. You have to have the hand quite deep.

Of course one can not give a recital on a clavichord. Unless there are only two or three people nearby. But I can remember once in a very funny little shop in New York City, I found an amplified clavichord which sounded marvelous. Without amplification it was terrible, but as soon as it was amplified it was wonderful. I am not against amplifying. We live in the 20th century and why should we not use this progress? I'm sure the old clavichord builders would have loved to have access to these wonderful things we have today. And here in America where you have such large recital halls, I think you should not hesitate to use amplified instruments, including harpsichords. I don't believe they should be amplified too much so it distorts their original sound, but I think some

(Continued on page 17)

The WELL-TUNED HARPSICHORD

by Dr George Sargent

PART II

You probably became very irritated with me as you followed the directions for tuning equal temperament given in the first article of this series: First I asked you to tune pure intervals to a complete absence of beats, and then I told you to *mistune* these so that the two notes beat together discordantly. Why was it necessary for us to abandon the lovely sound of the pure intervals and accept the beating of the tempered intervals?

There are many serious incompatibilities present in the relationships of pure intervals. One example: if you proceed around the so-called "circle of fifths" from C, your last note, B sharp will be about one quarter of a semitone higher than the original C. Octaves and fifths do not mix. Another example: If you proceed four-fifths up from C to E — C-G-D-A-E — the E will be one fifth of a semitone higher than a pure C-E third. Fifths and thirds do not mix. If you wanted a keyboard on which you could play pure intervals in all keys, you would need something like seventy-five notes in every octave! Those of you working on a difficult Bach fugue or Scarlatti sonata will surely agree that twelve notes to an octave are enough to worry about, let alone adding sixty-three more.

This is where tempering comes in. The trick is to find, for each key of your keyboard, a single compromise pitch that can be used for several different pitches that are close together. For example, the note F, which works as the tonic in F, the subdominant in C, the dominant in B flat, the submediant in A minor, etc., is in trouble when used as the mediant in D flat, the raised subdominant in B, or the leading tone in G flat — all pitches that are different from the basic F, and, for that matter, different from each other.

The selection of compromise pitches that will enable the keyboard

to retain the manageable twelve notes to the octave has fascinated music theorists as long as there have been keyboards. A fine introduction to this problem is a book called *Intervals, Scales, and Temperaments* (St. Martin's Press, 1963), which contains ten articles by Ilewelyn S. Lloyd on intervals and tunings, and a full account of the mathematical expression of musical intervals by Hugh Boyle (who is, incidentally, the London correspondent for *The Harpsichord*).

The desire you felt to retain the smoothness of pure intervals (especially the major third) is not new. The anguish most tuners feel in tuning equal temperament, when they spread the notes of a third so wide that the basic consonance of our music becomes almost a discordance, is reflected in the popularity of meantone temperament during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. This tuning did not attempt to distribute the compromises required through all the possible keys, but rather centered its attention on the most-commonly-used keys, and placed the "errors" on scales that were less common. The chromatic notes that were rarely found in music of that time — D flat, D sharp, G flat, and A sharp — were sacrificed in favor of C sharp, E flat, F sharp, and B flat. The choice between A flat and G sharp is a difficult one, and will be dealt with later.) Further, eight thirds were made pure at the considerable sacrifice of the four others, which became intolerably wide, and also at the sacrifice of eleven of the twelve fifths, which became dangerously narrow.

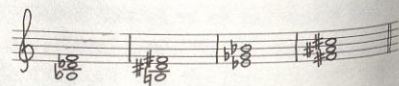
The combination of pure thirds and narrow fifths gives meantone temperament a "darker" sound than is the case with equal temperament with its sharp thirds and nearly-perfect fifths. This "darkness" is a marvelous foil for the natural "brightness" of the harpsichord sound.

Meantone temperament (MT) is much easier to tune than is equal

temperament (ET). Instead of having to balance three equal-sized, mistuned thirds within an octave, you start simply by tuning C-E pure. Now, you remember that in ET, you had to fit four slightly-narrow fifths between C-E, four more between E-G sharp, and still four more between G sharp-C. In tuning MT, this balancing of fifths need be done only once, between C and E. These fifths will be somewhat narrower than in ET; in ET the departure from pure was hardly noticeable, but in MT the beating will be about two beats per second in the middle range.

You have established C, G, D, A, and E, and the trial-and-error part of your work is done. No more tempering; only pure thirds and octaves remain to be tuned. Tune C sharp a third above A, E flat a third below G, F below A, F sharp above D, B flat below D, and B above G. And, of course, all the octaves.

We must now face the problem of enharmonic relationships, because these do not exist in MT. Each accidental note you tuned — C sharp, E flat, F sharp, and B flat — is that note and no other; the notes D flat, D sharp, G flat, and A sharp are simply not on your keyboard. As an empirical test of this, try playing the triads:



Hideous sound isn't it? Yet how often do you find these chords in the total body of harpsichord music? Not very — and there is contemporary evidence that Renaissance and Baroque performers were willing to put up with these occasional discordances in order to experience the lovely, mellow sound MT gave to *most* of their music.

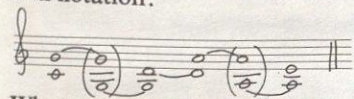
The only real enharmonic difficulty, which I have been evading until now, is the distinction between A flat and G sharp. *Both* these notes occur frequently in music you will be playing, and yet they are the least compatible of the five enharmonic pairs. Even splitting the difference between the two pitches (which are about two fifths of a semitone apart) will not solve the problem. Is there a

solution? No. This is one of the big problems in the study of old tunings. In general, English and French music favors G sharp, and German music favors A flat, but then there are Bach's works (not to mention Italian music of all three centuries), in which the two notes are interchangeable, and in which similar, though less serious, problems arise regarding the D sharp-E flat distinction. One tentative solution is retuning, of spending a minute changing G sharp (a third above E) to A flat (a third below C) before launching into a performance involving the appropriate pitch, but there is no historical justification for this practice.

Please don't be discouraged by this recitation of the difficulties involved in the use of MT. Try this tuning, enjoy the pure thirds and the chromatic distinctions, learn to accept the occasional clashes, and you will discover that the virtues of MT far outweigh the difficulties.

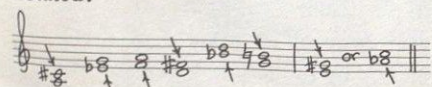
To sum up, here's how to tune MT:

- (1) Establish C.
- (2) Tune E a pure third above C. You are looking for that specific pitch of E at which there will be no beats when C and E are sounded together.
- (3) Balance four somewhat-flat fifths between C and E. Since the size of these fifths is critical, it is best to stick with fifths exclusively, and not use fourths alternating with fifths, as we did in tuning ET. Here it is in notation:



When you get all the fifths beating at the same rate (or perhaps the upper fifths beating ever so slightly faster than the lower ones), you have successfully set the basis for MT.

- (4) Now tune pure thirds as notated:



- (5) Tune the octaves. MT keeps the perfection of the third at the expense of the fifth. There

(Continued on page 20)

THE VICE SQUAD

(Continued from page 3)

whole story.

The similarity in spirit between present-day jazz (which I will call 'popular music') and the music of the Baroque lies in the characteristic mentioned above. Those among us who have been fortunate enough to be exposed to this predominant force are well aware of the improvisational character of popular music. Those among us who have been even more fortunate and have 'realized' these skeletal materials in actual performance, are indeed fortunate. There is little of even remote interest in the average 'stock' arrangement of a popular tune; it is not meant to be interesting as printed on the page. Its interest lies in a *stylistic realization* of this 'arrangement.'

How many piano teachers have been faced with the problem presented by a curious student who wants to play a current 'hit song'? The pupil brings the sheet music (stock arrangement) to his lesson and asks teacher to play it for him, or teach him to play it. A completely honest and secure (if albeit limited) teacher will simply tell his pupil that he does not play popular music. He can say this with the same degree of honest frankness he would use if asked to teach a song in a language he can not understand. The insecure teacher (who, of course is a charter-member of Music's Vice-Squad) will take refuge in condemning his pupil's errant taste or (worse) he may teach the deadly-dull 'stock arrangement' because he knows no better and will at worst only strengthen his own contention of poor taste on the part of his pupil. Hopefully he will not have destroyed his pupil's curiosity, interest and love for popular music . . . only sidetracked it from teacher's disapproving eyes.

That the Baroque is an *improvisational music* can be established for the doubting Thomases if they will bestir themselves and seek out the Variant version of the first 'Invention' of Bach. They must seriously ask themselves *why* Bach made this version? Had he run out of ideas for any more

music? It would require a formidable obtuse mind not to realize that Bach wrote this Variant version for the express purpose of creating an example of *what could be done by a skilled improvisateur* with his already-fully noted score. The Capriccio (on the Departure of a beloved Brother) is a good example of Bach's skeletal score, for the published versions are invariable 'realizations' by some musician attached to the publishing house. Bach *intended* the performer to follow the flights of his personal fancy. Large, formal works like the Italian Concerto, the Goldberg, the Partitas, the Suites are certainly fully noted, but never forget that *even though they are so noted* (as is the First Invention), this does not bar one's own inferences regarding performance.

In a future issue, I will take up the second contingent of the 'Vice-Squad of Music's World'; the Pure Exalted Spirit Charter-Members who all have celestial Pipe-Lines. I hope to tread heavily on many sensitive toes!

Hugh O'Meagher
Chairman Harpsichord Dept.
Peabody Conservatory-College

SILVIA KIND

(Continued from page 15)

amplification would be fine. We use them some in Europe.

Speaking of America, I would like to say in closing what a wonderful country you live in. I would love to travel from small town to town. Even perhaps to ranches where people could come in for an evening of music. It would be a wonderful way to get to know America. I would very much like to do this. I am so interested in this country. I have met such wonderful people here and if I can help introduce fine music, or perhaps contribute to the enjoyment of playing or listening to good music, it would indeed make me very happy.

THE HARPSICHORD: You have indeed contributed to our enjoyment of playing and listening to fine music, Miss Kind and we sincerely appreciate your sharing your time and knowledge with us.

From LONDON

by Hugh Boyle

For me, the names "Harpsichord" and "John Barnes" are synonymous. So, after having agreed to become London correspondent for THE HARPSICHORD, it was natural that my first reaction should be to pay him a visit at his home (and workshop) in Surrey, some twenty or so miles south of central London.

Readers who are familiar with the Galpin Society's Journal will need no introduction to the work of John Barnes. But for those who have not yet had the pleasure of reading these journals, I should explain that he is concerned with the work of restoration and reproduction of antique keyboard instruments, in all its possible aspects.

Some years ago John Barnes de-

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The Harpsichord

cided to give up development work on magnetic tape and to devote all his efforts to what had, up to that time, been purely a hobby of his — the building of harpsichords and clavichords. But living in the south of England, near London, in which there is a greater concentration of antique keyboard instruments than anywhere else in the world, he soon found himself having to spend more than half his time in re-quilling and repairing these old instruments — many of which are still in private hands. In carrying out this work he discovered that most of these instruments had already been 'restored' — some quite recently — and was frequently compelled to spend more time in correcting the results of other people's work than in the real business of true restoration.

The high standards by which he judges his efforts were first set for him by the two old harpsichords which he keeps at his home. These standards were later enhanced by the experience he gained in restoring some of the antique keyboard instruments in the Victoria and Albert Museum — many of which had not been worked on since the 18th century. Here he found quills, cut at that time, still in perfect condition, together with a great deal of evidence which ran contrary to the opinions given in modern textbooks on the subject.

I asked him how he would define 'restoration'. Also, what advice he would give to others less experienced than himself who found themselves faced with the problem of restoration. He replied, that the true work of historic restoration consisted of gently reversing the effects of wear, neglect and distortion, and the damage done by boring insects — and that in all this work the following principles should be strictly observed.

1. That all parts of any age which have to be removed from the instrument (such as old strings, plectra, damper felt, original jacks, etc.,) should, ideally, be preserved and kept with the instrument.
2. That all original parts, such as jacks, etc., should be repaired, how-

ever much easier it would be to replace them, and that any unavoidable replacements should be made as nearly identical to the original as is possible.

3. That only those glues which will dissolve in water be used. He regards the last point as being of particular importance since the use nowadays of resin glues renders the possibility of subsequent repair extremely remote, and says that we owe it to future generations to see that these principles are fully appreciated and carried out.

He has some challenging views on modern harpsichord building and spoke to me for some considerable time on the subject during my visit. In fact, so much so, that on reflection afterwards I deemed it wiser to ask him to summarise his opinions on this matter rather than attempt it myself. This he kindly did for me, in a letter, from which the following is quoted.

"Writing in 1959, in the introduction of his book *The Harpsichord and Clavichord*, the late Raymond Russell effectively cuts the modern craft of harpsichord building down to size. After explaining that at one stage his book had contained material on the modern instrument he continues; 'but I removed the chapter as this activity is in a state of adolescence and (I hope) of change.' There has been some change during the last decade, but not a great deal.

"A restorer finds much to criticise in modern harpsichords. Concert instruments tend to be considerably more complicated than is justified by the demands of any worthy music, and players have yet to realize that each additional unnecessary row of jacks and set of strings reduces the efficiency of the rest of the instrument. Traditional harpsichords, whatever their period, are rather like sports cars — light to handle, exactly designed for a particular well-understood purpose, and brought to a state of great efficiency by ruthless competition. Whereas the modern concert harpsichord is more like a family vehicle; designed to provide comfort and distraction during long journeys to its assorted occu-

pants, and a feeling of familiar solidarity to its driver.

"For the demands of entertainment this kind of instrument is adequate and well-suited, but it is not the sort of tool needed by the serious musician — especially the student — if he is to discover for himself the subtleties of interpretation possible in the performance of all the earlier keyboard music. Moreover, the more sensitive and creative the artist, the more will he be led astray by these kind of instruments. For the purposes of such a musician, nothing will really suffice except a careful restoration or an accurate reproduction of some suitable old harpsichord."

Seeing that Mr. Barnes has so many restorations to do, and because he feels that there is so much to be learned of the history of harpsichord making that can only be gleaned from the detailed and leisurely study of instruments while under repair in his workshop, he has, for the time being, completely given up the making of instruments for sale. However, since he thinks that making and restoring should go hand in hand, he is building some copies of Flemish and Italian practice — for his own education.

He is well aware of the problems involved in the recording of old instruments and, having a keen ear is frequently asked to tune harpsichords and to maintain their tunings during recording sessions. This is often a formidable task and he finds it best to tune twice before the start and seize every opportunity during breaks to carry out partial retuning — mainly to correct drift in the upper octaves, more particularly in the four foot register. Once the tuning of an instrument is accurately achieved it is surprising how little it needs to vary before deterioration is detectable and how short a time this then takes to occur. The kind of tuning he provides for these occasions depends on the demands of the music to be performed, and may be anything from meantone to equal temperament. How I wish that this kind of care and attention to detail was considered an essential part of all similar recording sessions.

Hugh Boyle

ZUCKERMANN

(Continued from page 2)

thetic materials which bend evenly under the stress of the pluck, requiring more force to be pushed past the string, and then are released suddenly with a little "explosive" mechanical sound in addition to the musical sound. Although the above is somewhat theoretical, it is generally true that synthetic materials when used in musical instruments reduce the warm glow or timbre which is characteristic of these instruments.

After this long introduction, it must come as something of an anticlimax that I have recently revoiced my own 8' by 4' harpsichord at home with Delrin. My house, which is a converted stable in a little alley near the river, is excessively humid even for New York, and I decided that for all the mellowness of leather, I was not going to fiddle with the instrument each time we sat down to play chamber music.

There is a lot you can do with Delrin to take out the unpleasantness caused by the sudden unbending after the pluck. The main thing is to take out the "spring" of the material to get it to move past the string without undue force. A vigorous massaging or flexing of the entire plectrum either by hand or with tweezers will reduce its resistance. It may be asked why thinner material can't be used. Aside from the fact that .020 is the thinnest Delrin that can be obtained commercially, anything thinner would break or sag. The disadvantage to massaging or flexing the material is that its effects do not seem to last. It has to be repeated every few months. In addition, repeated plucking seems to alter the internal structure of Delrin so that it gets even harder and stiffer. The longer the Delrin, and thus the more gradual the bend, the less this hardening effect seems to take place since the stresses on the plectrum are distributed over a large area.

For all these reasons, Delrin is far from the ideal plucking material, but it does have the advantage of having been tried and being able to withstand an almost limitless number of plucks without sagging. In addition,

Delrin is one of the few plastics absolutely impervious to water and humidity. It is also somewhat self-lubricating and smooth, allowing it to slide back on its way down.

Readers are invited to report their experiments with other types of synthetic material. We would also be interested in hearing from those who have used real quill. Quill is said to be best if pulled from the bird no later than half an hour after its demise and this requirement would make its commercial supply slightly erratic. In addition, this material tends to split or crack easily, but the tone resulting from a quilled instrument has the firm definition of Delrin without being accompanied by that nasty little mechanical explosion.

Wallace Zuckermann

HARPSICHORD OF NOTE

(Continued from page 9)

were being sold as late as 1755, 1757 and 1765 and a spinet attributed to Marius was displayed at the Inventions Exhibition in 1755, which was just two years before Nonnemacher completed the instrument photographed here.

Also, in that same year, 1755, an inventory was taken of the shop of French Harpsichord builder Jean Marie Galland which revealed a stock of 6 folding harpsichords. The prices are given in French Liveres which is the equivalent of the English pound. May 14, 1755, 2 folding harpsichords in two pieces of which one has split sharps and the other a small compass. 50L. One folding harpsichord in three pieces and with split sharps, 50L. Three small folding harpsichords at the octave (4' pitch) 216L: 1760, A walnut folding harpsichord in two pieces with three choirs, 60L. A folding 4' harpsichord in walnut, two choirs at unison, 42L.

It seems that today, with the entire world either on wheels or wings, a folding harpsichord would be a very practical instrument to own. It would be an excellent project for the builder who wants to branch out into a unique and uncrowded field.

(HLH)

LETTERS

Dear Hal,

I have enjoyed the second issue of "The Harpsichord", especially the excellent photographs of the featured instrument. On that topic, I wonder if you've seen a book entitled "Musical Instruments of the Western World". It's a \$30 extravaganza of beautiful color photographs — quite a few of them harpsichords and virginals.

Allen Green's puzzlement over the attraction that baroque music holds for devotees of contemporary rock 'n roll and folk rock deserves some comment. First of all, in fairness to the modern idiom, I think it should be noted that the 18th and 17th century music to which the person just beginning to develop a casual interest is exposed is likely to be composed of well known masterpieces — or at least very good work. The passage of time must have filtered out a vast quantity of mediocre work. By contrast, music which is current is broadcast indiscriminately, just as it must have been 'back then'. There is a much greater chance therefore that a person listening unselectively to contemporary music may be listening to a poor representative of the movement, (as compared with the person who listens unselectively to ancient music).

Secondly, in reference to the common ground shared by good rock and good baroque . . . while it is true that a good many of the avant garde groups depend on rather "free form" rhythm and shock appeal lyrics, the groups and singers with the broadest and most sustained appeal rely by contrast on a relatively regular rhythm and a strong sense of "melodic inevitability", both characteristics shared by baroque composers. I suspect that if those youngsters who are "buying baroque" could articulate their motives, they would say that the music "has a beat", moves them mentally and/or physically, is "easy to follow", "doesn't leave them hanging", and in general drives with an un-

The Harpsichord

relenting increase in tension to a satisfying conclusion just as, on a simpler basis, good folk and folk rock does.

Wallace Zuckermann's column was most provocative. He has pinpointed a widespread personal problem which is developing as a result of our advancing technology. For those interested, Paul Goodman discusses this problem in depth in his book "Growing Up Absurd". Identifying the problem is a good deal easier than solving it though. I rather imagine that instructing everyone to be his own home handyman is a bit too simplistic an approach.

In reference to harpsichord making, the other side of the coin may also be noted. Granted that creative work is satisfying or essential to many men, one still wonders why in this age of scientific analysis, music instrument production hasn't been taken out of the vague creative field and put on the production line along with everything else, (some of it has — I know). Surely our science ought to be able to decide what physical design requirements are necessary to produce any desired acoustical result.

The answer has to be that there is not enough of a demand for instruments, or for quality, to make the scientific investigation required pay off economically. It is somewhat bittersweet to contemplate that with the world's increasing population and hopefully increasing leisure, this demand may increase to the point where it becomes economically profitable to attach harpsichord design technologically and analyze all the mystery out of it. When the mystery is gone, the creative enjoyment for amateur builders will be gone with it.

Sincerely,
Dr. John Brodsky
Columbus, Ga.

* * * *

Dear Sirs:

I was given a copy of your first issue a few months ago, which I very much enjoyed reading.

I wish you success with your ven-

ture and wonder whether it would be possible to subscribe.

Yours sincerely,
Igor Kipnis
New York City, N. Y.

WELL TUNED HARPSICHORD

(Continued from page 17)

are some tuning systems that keep the perfection of the fifth at the expense of the third. The sound of these "Pythagorean" systems is extremely brilliant and clear — almost painfully so on the harpsichord — and is well suited for the clavichord, to give the small sound of that instrument more bite. Several of these tunings will be discussed in the next issue of *The Harpsichord*. Dr. George Sargent

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